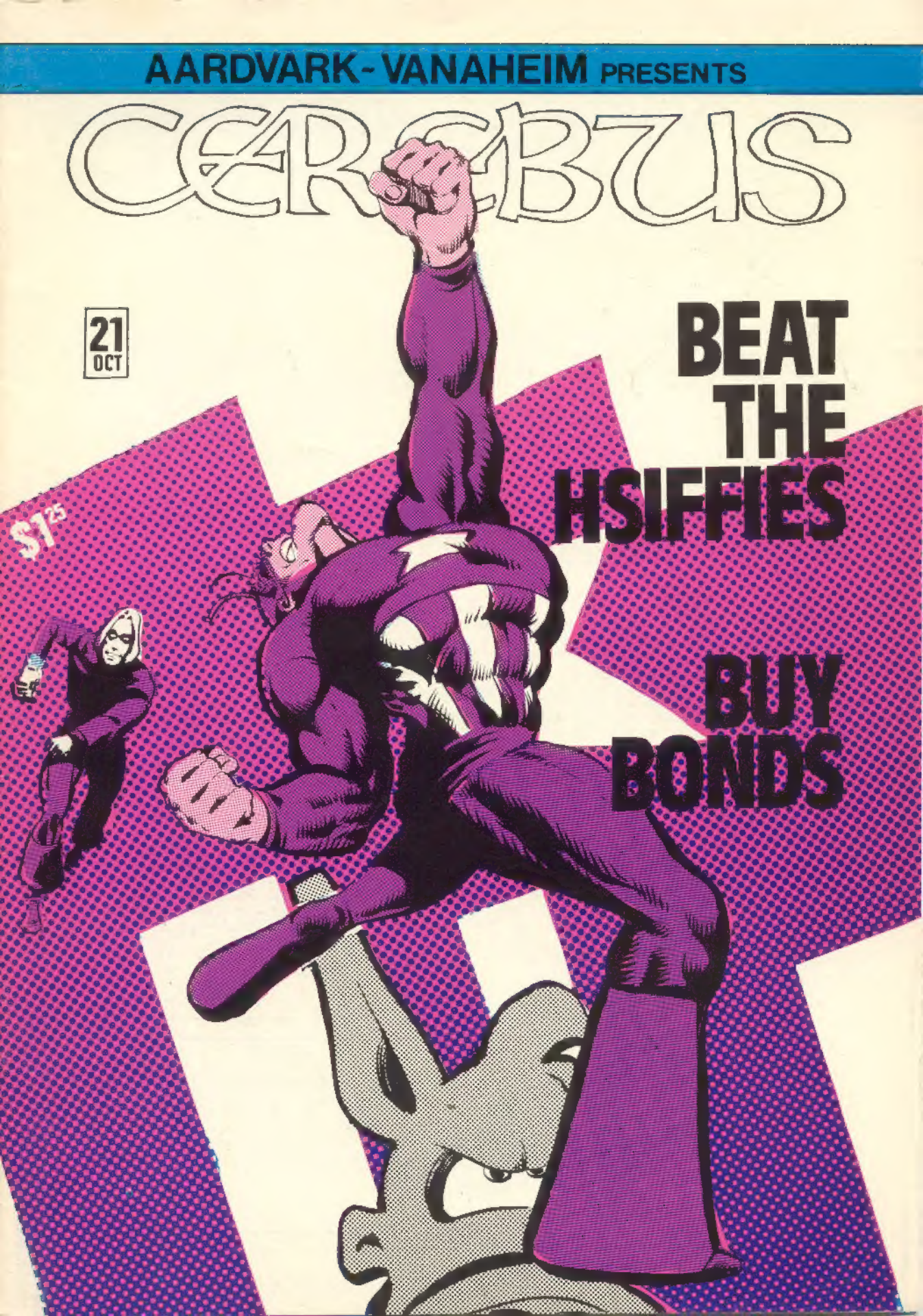
AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

CEREBUS

21 OCT

$1.75



CEREBUS

A Note from the Publisher

By the time this is being printed the mail strike here in Canada should be well under way. For those of you who subscribe through Now and Then Books, you may be getting this a bit later than usual, but there is little anyone can do about it.

You will probably notice that there is no Aardvarkian Age in this issue. Michael is in the process of re-evaluating it and it may be decided to have it appear in the newsletter instead of here. In any event, Michael has done a story for the newsletter and when this mail strike is over I will send out something as well as whatever Dave is putting in it.

So far, Fred Patten has mainly received artwork and very little in the way of written contributions. I hope that I will hear differently from him in the next letter. If you haven't yet sent in your contributions or written for a subscription, what's holding you?! The address is: Fred Patten, 11863 West Jefferson Blvd., Culver City, California, 90230. The subscription is $2.00 for one year (4 issues). If you had written to me asking about the newsletter I would suggest that you write to Fred. I don't trust the mails much here in Canada, or how complete my list is. .

I was talking to Phil Seuling lately and he told me that interest in the Swords of Cerebus book is high. I regret it is taking so long to produce it, but now Marshall Rogers' pencils are stuck in the mail, somewhere between New York and here. I don't know when we will see them. Today is Wednesday and their official strike begins next Monday. The unofficial one just ended so the backlog is terrific!! But once we get those pencils, we will be just about done as the cover is nearly finished. With any luck (ha!) it should be out after 22. We hope!!

If David Miley of New York should read this, I sent you your aardvark and it was returned to me just before the strike began. If you can be reached somewhere else, could you let me know?

As I had **minor** surgery (yes, I'm fine) this month I haven't followed the production of the story but was able to read it in one lump instead of the usual page-a-day. I was surprised how much I enjoyed it. (I gotta do this more often!) So please do go ahead and begin it. God, it's funny!!!

Denise

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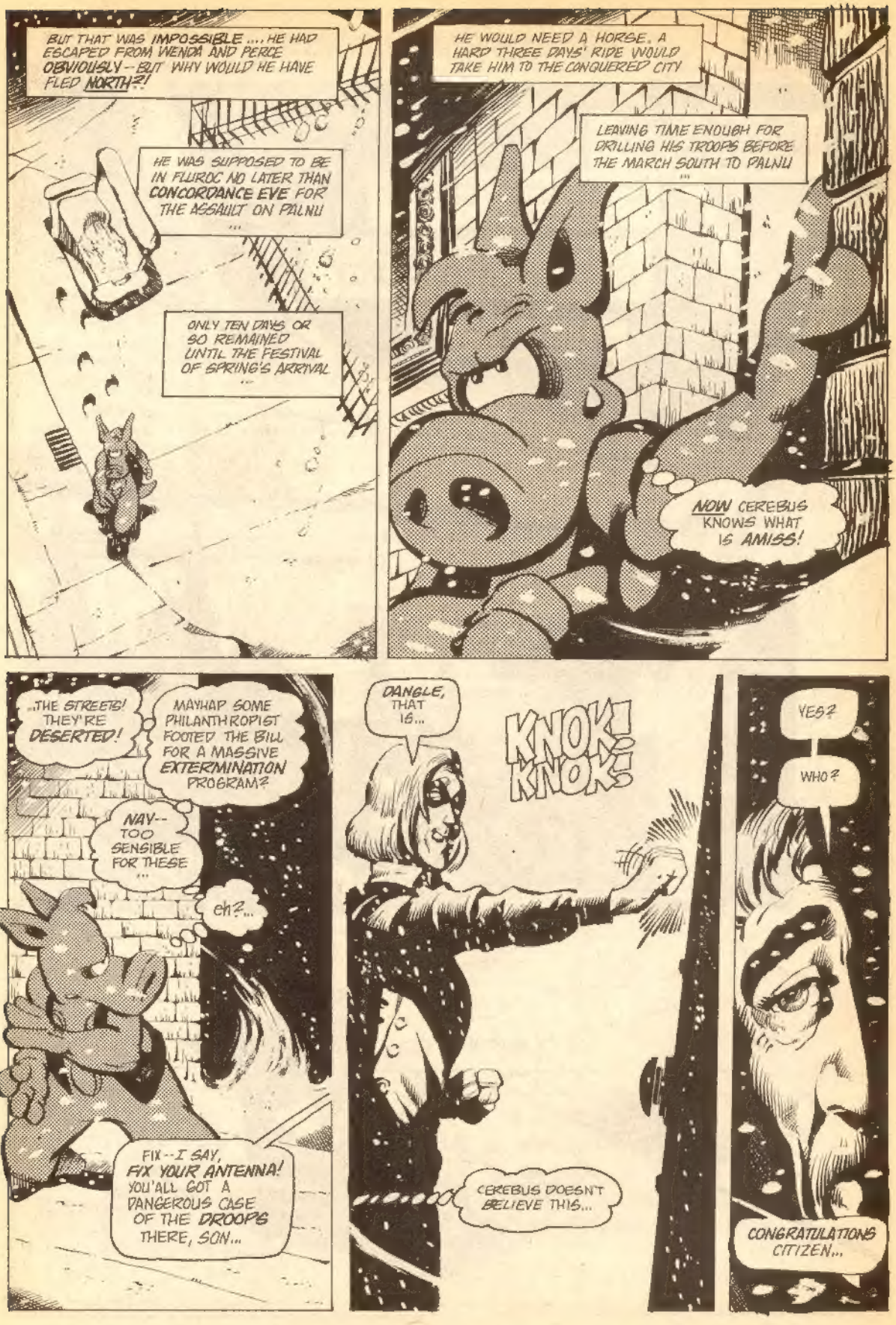
IN POINT OF FACT, IT DIDN'T LOOK LIKE TORITH AT ALL... SOMEHOW HE HAD BEEN MOVED FURTHER NORTH...
SOMEHOW, HE WAS NO LONGER IN EVEN THE GENERAL VICINITY OF PERCE, WENDO OR SUENTELIS PO...
THE EARTH-PIG CONTINUES TO STARE AT HIS SURROUNDINGS, GRADUALLY PIECING TOGETHER ALL THE AVAILABLE EVIDENCE, UNTIL, AT LAST...
HE IS CERTAIN OF HIS NEW LOCATION...
BEDUIN?
CEREBUS IS IN BEDUIN?!


BUT THAT WAS IMPOSSIBLE ... HE HAD ESCAPED FROM WENDA AND PERCE OBVIOUSLY -- BUT WHY WOULD HE HAVE FLED NORTH?!
HE WAS SUPPOSED TO BE IN FLUROC NO LATER THAN CONCORDANCE EVE FOR THE ASSAULT ON PALNU ...
ONLY TEN DAYS OR SO REMAINED UNTIL THE FESTIVAL OF SPRING'S ARRIVAL ...
HE WOULD NEED A HORSE. A HARD THREE DAYS' RIDE WOULD TAKE HIM TO THE CONQUERED CITY
LEAVING TIME ENOUGH FOR DRILLING HIS TROOPS BEFORE THE MARCH SOUTH TO PALNU ...
NOW CEREBUS KNOWS WHAT IS AMISS!
..THE STREETS! THEY'RE DESERTED!
MAYHAP SOME PHILANTHROPIST FOOTED THE BILL FOR A MASSIVE EXTERMINATION PROGRAM?
NAY-- TOO SENSIBLE FOR THESE ...
eh?...
FIX -- I SAY, FIX YOUR ANTENNA! YOU'LL GOT A DANGEROUS CASE OF THE DROOPS THERE, SON...
DANGLE, THAT IS...
KNOK! KNOK!
CEREBUS DOESN'T BELIEVE THIS...
YES?
WHO?
CONGRATULATIONS CITIZEN...

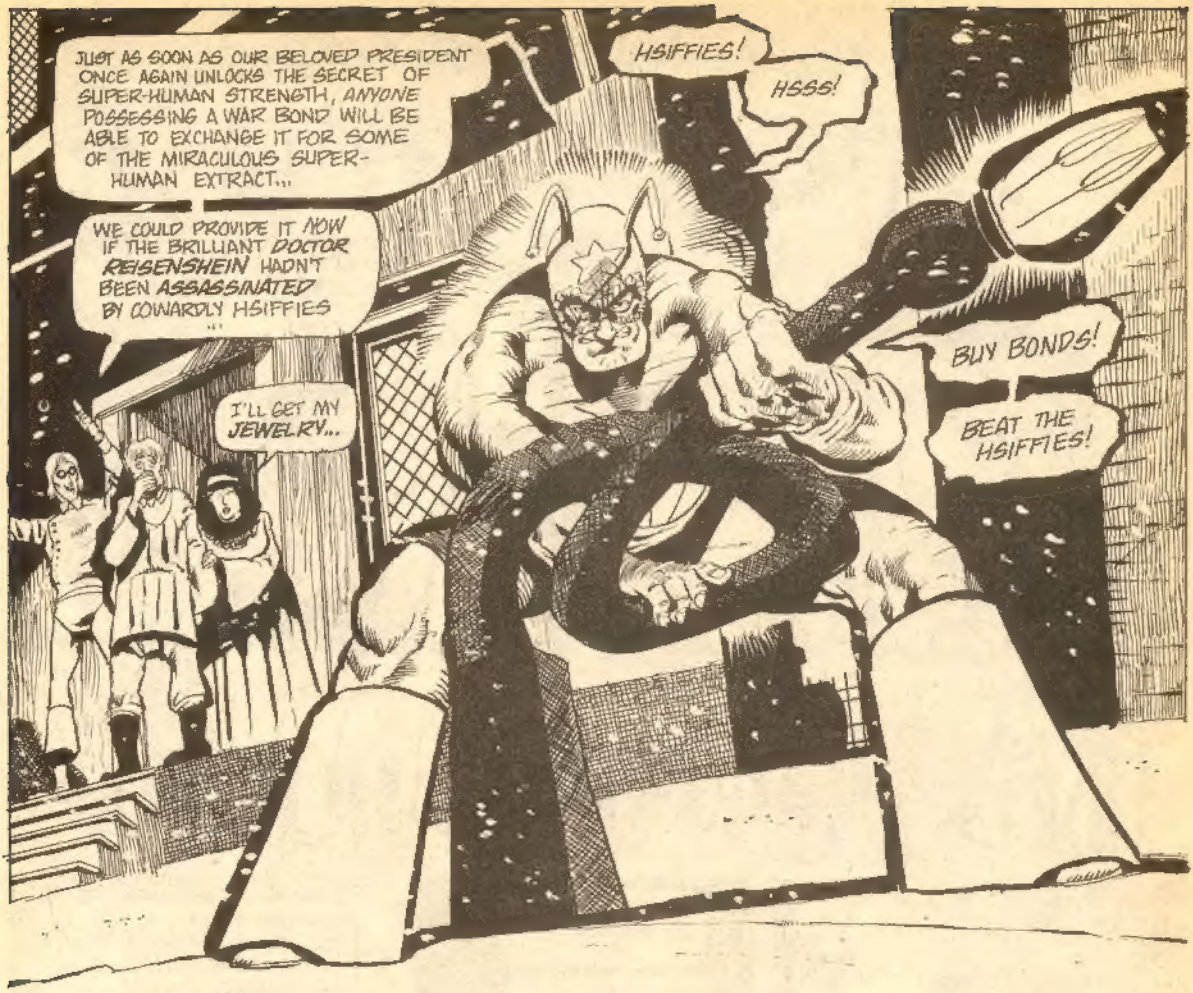
OH, MY.
IT'S HIM! IT IS! I MEAN, THE REAL HIM! THIS CAN'T BE REALLY HAPPENING TO ME, CAN IT?
IT IS, SON, IT IS! THE ONE AND ONLY, HSIFFY-HATING, PURPLE, WHITE AND TRUE BLUE CAPTAIN...
... I SAY ...

"CAPTAIN COCKROACH!!"

...ROLE-MODEL FOR OUR MASTER RACE -- PROTO-TYPE, THAT IS...
HURRY, MOTHER, IT'S CAPTAIN COCKROACH
AND HE REALLY IS SEVEN FEET TALL...
COME AND SEE...!

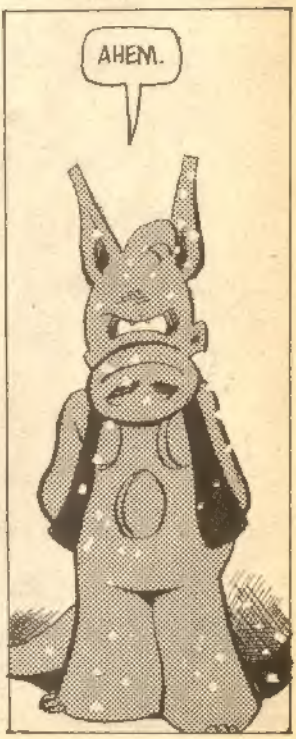
MY! HE CERTAINLY IS STRONG ISN'T HE?
MERELY THE NEXT STAGE OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, MA'AM...
AND WE NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE THE DREAM OF OUR BELOVED PRESIDENT A REALITY...!
BUT WHAT CAN US POOR CITIZENS DO?

YOU CAN -- I SAY -- YOU CAN BUY A UNITED FELDWAR STATES GOVAMENT-IN-EXILE WAR BOND...
YOU, TOO, CAN BE A WALKING EXAMPLE OF RACIAL SUPERIORITY ...
YOU MEAN I CAN HAVE MUSCLES ...
... LIKE HIS?!


JUST AS SOON AS OUR BELOVED PRESIDENT ONCE AGAIN UNLOCKS THE SECRET OF SUPER-HUMAN STRENGTH, ANYONE POSSESSING A WAR BOND WILL BE ABLE TO EXCHANGE IT FOR SOME OF THE MIRACULOUS SUPER-HUMAN EXTRACT...
WE COULD PROVIDE IT NOW IF THE BRILLIANT DOCTOR REISENSHEIN HADN'T BEEN ASSASSINATED BY COWARDLY HSIFFIES ...
I'LL GET MY JEWELRY...
HSIFFIES!
HSSS!
BUY BONDS!
BEAT THE HSIFFIES!

WELL, Y'ALL KEEP READIN' THE WEEKLY MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT
OH, WE WILL! THANK YOU, BUNKY THE ALBINO THANK YOU ...

NOT AT ALL! CAPTAIN...?
TIME--I SAY--TIME FOR US TO LEAVE --GREENER PASTURES, THAT IS
YELLOW-SKINNED, BUCK-TOOTHED NO GOOD BAIK!!! ...

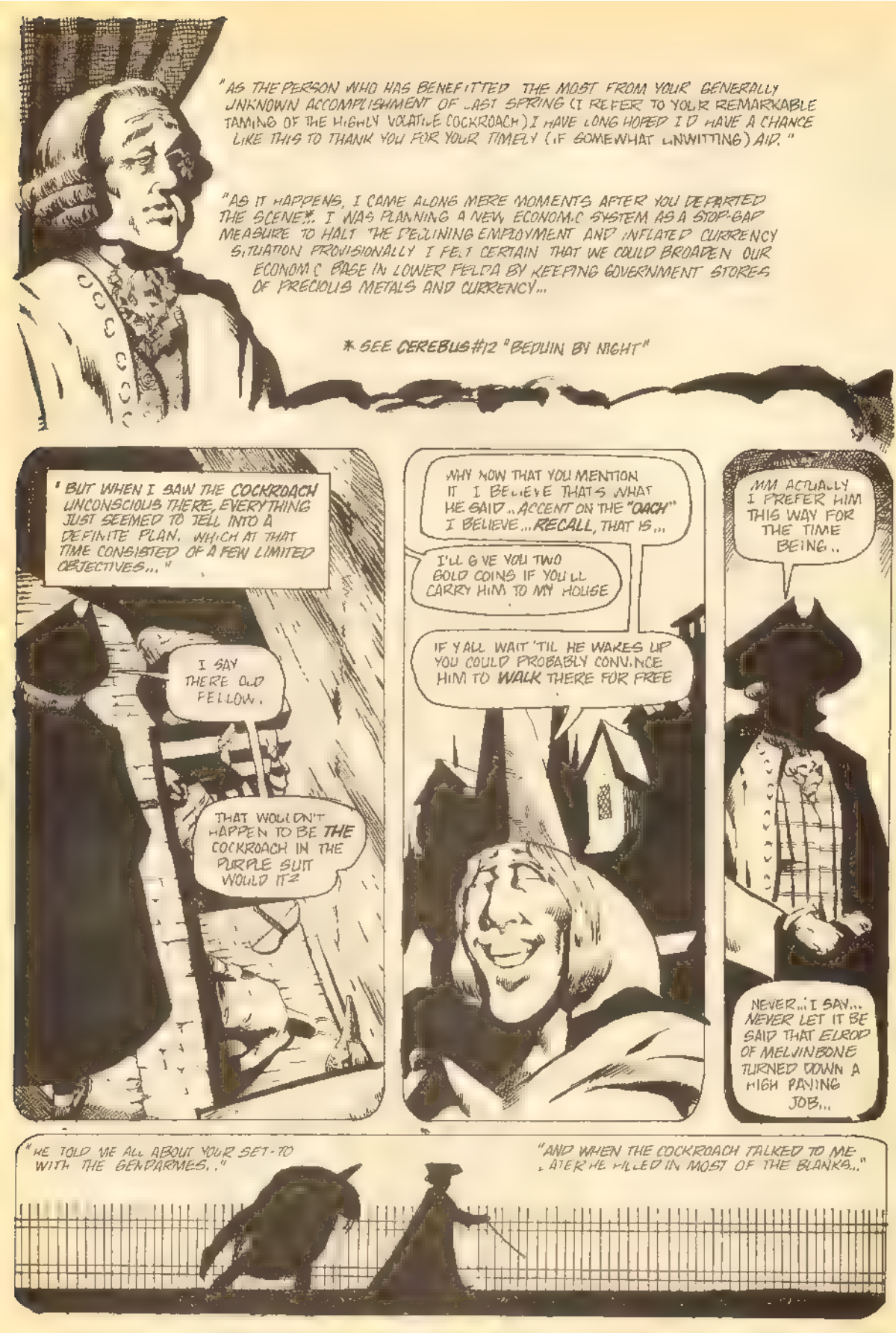

AHEM.

WELL, PARBOIL MY HINDQUARTERS IF IT ISN'T...
CEREBUS JUST HAS A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS AND THEN HE HAS A WAR TO CATCH -- QUESTION ONE:...
...HSIFFY?
DEROGATORY REFERENCE TO PERSONNEL INDIGENOUS TO THE HSIFAN KHANATE
...SEEMS TO FAIRLY UNHINGE THE LITTLE BUGGERS USED IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT
uh-huh -- NOW, ABOUT THIS "PRESIDENT" THE LAST TIME CEREBUS LOOKED, A FIVE-MAN MILITARY TRIBUNAL WAS RUNNING LOWER FELDA...
TRIBUNAL? HEH-HEH! DON'T BE NAIVE, SON...
PRESIDENT WEISSHAUPT IS THE MAN OF THE MOMENT... THE PEOPLE'S CHOICE, THAT IS!
HE'S A REAL HUMANITARIAN TOO -- PLANS TO ERADICATE THE HSIFFIES FOR THE GREATER GOOD OF MANKIND...
uh-huh
AND WHAT DOES THIS DEMI-GOD GET OUT OF THE DEAL?
THE JOY OF BEING THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY, SON...
"LIKE FREEDOM-LOVING MEN EVERYWHERE, PRESIDENT WEISSHAUPT DEDICATES HIS LIFE TO CORRECTING INJUSTICE."
"WHERE ELSE BUT LOWER FELDA COULD A MAN OF HUMBLE BIRTH, RAISE HIMSELF IN THIRTY YEARS TO THE EXALTED POST OF COMMANDER"-IN-CHIEF...
"WHERE HE OCCUPIES HIS TIME PRODUCING THE FINEST EXAMPLES OF PURE-BRED MANHOOD FOR THE TASK OF WIPING OUT HSIFANS PERMANENTLY."
WE'RE GOING TO SEE HIM NOW IF Y'ALL...
TEN MINUTES.
AND THEN CEREBUS WILL HAVE TO LEAVE...

WATCH YOUR STEP! THESE--I SAY--THESE STAIRS ARE ABOUT AS SHAKY AS A LONG-TAILED CAT IN A ROOMFUL OF ROCKING CHAIRS
UNSAFE, THAT IS...
THE OVAL HIDEOUT IS DOWN H'YAR, SON! THIS IS WHERE THE PRESIDENT PLANS WHAT HE'S GOING TO DO TO THE COUNTRY...
WE HAVE TO WAIT HERE
CAPTAIN COCKROACH IS ALWAYS THE FIRST TO ENTER THE OVAL HIDEOUT...
IT MIGHT BE A FEW MINUTES, YET...
THE OH-AY-EF IS A LITTLE SEE-EL-YOU-EM-ESS-WHY...
IF Y'ALL CATCH MY DRIFT ...
MR. PRESIDENT...
CAPTAIN COCKROACH REPORTING, SIR!
AT EASE, CAPTAIN ...
I'VE BROUGHT A FOREIGNER OF INDETERMINATE ORIGIN TO MEET YOU, SIR
MMM. I CERTAINLY HOPE HE'S CLEANER THAN THE LAST ONE ...

MOMENTS LATER...
OH, YES SIR, MR. PRESIDENT ...
RIGHT AWAY, SIR...
LISTEN FOR SOME REASON HE WANTS TO SEE YOU ALONE INSIDE THERE ARE A FEW THINGS YOU HAVE TO KEEP FROM DOING NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS IN THERE ONE: DON'T UNDER ANY
MOVE YOUR HANDS OR LOSE THEM, COOTIE.
YOU SEE?! YOU SEE?!
YOU CAN'T SAY THINGS LIKE THAT TO THE PRESIDENT!
IF HE WANTS TO TOUCH YOU, YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO LET HIM! YOU UNDERSTAND?!
YOU-MUST-NOT-BREAK-THE-PRESIDENT!!
CAPTAIN? IS HE COMING IN OR NOT...?
OH, YESSIR, MR. PRESIDENT! TWO SHAKES OF A LAMB'S TAIL, SIR!
DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING
CALL HIM MR. PRESIDENT
DON'T SIT UNTIL HE DOES
APPROACH THE DESK FROM THE LEFT IF HE'S BEHIND IT...
DON'T MENTION HIS FAMILY ...
DON'T SAY ANYTHING UNTIL HE SPEAKS TO YOU...
DON'T EAT THE FRUIT
AND WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T STARE AT HIS ANKLE!!
WHA...? IS HE A CRIPPLE OR SOMETHING?
OH MY--
...GOD.

WELL, WELL, WELL. JUST WHEN I HAD RESIGNED MYSELF TO THE FACT THAT I WAS FATED TO NEVER MEET CEREBUS THE AARDVARK
HERE YOU ARE
I HOPE YOU'LL EXCUSE MY UNTIDINESS IT'S MY NEW MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT READY FOR RELEASE TOMORROW...
SOME WINE, PERHAPS? I HAVE A FEW BOTTLES OF CHATEAU DONTE TUCKED AWAY FOR A SPECIAL OCCASION...
AVE.
YOU HAVE HEARD OF CEREBUS, THEN?


"AS THE PERSON WHO HAS BENEFITTED THE MOST FROM YOUR GENERALLY UNKNOWN ACCOMPLISHMENT OF LAST SPRING (I REFER TO YOUR REMARKABLE TAMING OF THE HIGHLY VOLATILE COCKROACH) I HAVE LONG HOPED I'D HAVE A CHANCE LIKE THIS TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIMELY (IF SOMEWHAT UNWITTING) AID."
"AS IT HAPPENS, I CAME ALONG MERE MOMENTS AFTER YOU DEPARTED THE SCENE*. I WAS PLANNING A NEW ECONOMIC SYSTEM AS A STOP-GAP MEASURE TO HALT THE DECLINING EMPLOYMENT AND INFLATED CURRENCY SITUATION PROVISIONALLY I FELT CERTAIN THAT WE COULD BROADEN OUR ECONOMIC BASE IN LOWER FELDA BY KEEPING GOVERNMENT STORES OF PRECIOUS METALS AND CURRENCY...
* SEE CEREBUS #12 "BEDUIN BY NIGHT"
"BUT WHEN I SAW THE COCKROACH UNCONSCIOUS THERE, EVERYTHING JUST SEEMED TO FALL INTO A DEFINITE PLAN, WHICH AT THAT TIME CONSISTED OF A FEW LIMITED OBJECTIVES..."
I SAY THERE OLD FELLOW..
THAT WOULDN'T HAPPEN TO BE THE COCKROACH IN THE PURPLE SUIT WOULD IT?
WHY NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT I BELIEVE THAT'S WHAT HE SAID... ACCENT ON THE "OACH" I BELIEVE... RECALL, THAT IS...
I'LL GIVE YOU TWO GOLD COINS IF YOU'LL CARRY HIM TO MY HOUSE
IF Y'ALL WAIT 'TIL HE WAKES UP YOU COULD PROBABLY CONVINCE HIM TO WALK THERE FOR FREE
MM ACTUALLY I PREFER HIM THIS WAY FOR THE TIME BEING..
NEVER... I SAY... NEVER LET IT BE SAID THAT ELROD OF MELVINBONE TURNED DOWN A HIGH PAYING JOB...
"HE TOLD ME ALL ABOUT YOUR SET-TO WITH THE GENDARMES.."
"AND WHEN THE COCKROACH TALKED TO ME LATER HE FILLED IN MOST OF THE BLANKS..."

"WHEN WE ARRIVED HERE, I HAD ELROD REMOVED TO A GUEST ROOM WHERE HE STAYED FOR THE SIX MONTHS I NEEDED..."
I THEN HAD THE COCKROACH BROUGHT DOWNSTAIRS, STILL UNCONSCIOUS
"I HAD HEARD ENOUGH ABOUT HIM TO FEEL I COULD PERSUADE HIM TO DIRECT HIS ENERGIES INTO MORE USEFUL DISCIPLINES"
" AND MAKING ME RICH BEYOND MY WILDEST DREAMS SEEMED AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY TO START..."
"HE AWOKE ABOUT AN HOUR LATER..."
"I TOLD HIM HE WAS IMMERSED IN A MIRACLE SOLUTION OF 'ALUCASE' WHICH MADE HIS MUSCLES LARGER EVERY TIME HE USED THEM. I EXPLAINED THAT PROF. REISENSHEIN HAD DIED BEFORE HE COULD REVEAL THE FORMULA AND THAT HE (THE COCKROACH) WAS THE ONLY TEST CASE."
"I ADDED THAT IT SEEMED TO ME, AS PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED FELDWAR STATES, THAT SOMEONE WITH THAT KIND OF ADVANTAGE WHO DIDN'T MAKE USE OF IT WAS OBVIOUSLY A NO-GOOD ROTTEN STINKING SCUM OF A HSIFAN TRAITOR...
"HE PLEDGED UNDYING FEALTY."
"BUT, THE SOLUTION WAS A FAKE-- HOW DID YOU BUILD HIS MUSCLES?
"I HAD HIM MOVE MY COLLECTION OF MARBLE STATUES FROM THE BASEMENT TO THE ATTIC..."
"IT'S ACTUALLY NOT DIFFICULT TO BUILD A PHYSICALLY SUPERIOR HUMAN SPECIMEN."
THE TOUGH PART IS FINDING SOMEONE GULLIBLE ENOUGH TO WORK AT IT FOR SIX MONTHS.."

"ELROD WAS MOST IMPRESSED. HE PROMISED TO WORK GRATIS IF HE COULD BE THE SUBJECT OF THE NEXT EXPERIMENT."
'CEREBUS DOESN'T UNDERSTAND WHY YOU WOULD NEED ELROD"
"I PLAN TO RUN LOWER FELDA IN A FEW YEARS"
"AND I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT IF YOU CAN'T FOOL ALL OF THE PEOPLE ALL OF THE TIME, YOU SHOULD START BREEDING THEM FOR STUPIDITY..."
"I RELEASED THE FIRST OF MY 'MESSAGES' DETAILING PROFESSOR REISENSHEIN'S NEW INVENTION, ANNOUNCING THAT THE COCKROACH WAS THE SUBJECT OF THE FIRST TEST AND NOTIFYING THE POPULACE THAT AS PRESIDENT I WAS CONFERRING UPON HIM THE HONORARY TITLE OF "CAPTAIN" IN THE ARMY OF LOWER FELDA.."
"THE NEXT WEEK I ANNOUNCED THAT PROFESSOR REISENSHEIN HAD BEEN KILLED BY HIS FAN, SPIES, THAT CAPT COCKROACH WAS GOING TO THE PEOPLE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO HELP REDISCOVER THE FORMULA FOR "ALUCASE."
"I ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT EACH CONTRIBUTION OF SIX SILVER PIECES WOULD ENTITLE THE BUYER TO A WAR BOND WORTH TWELVE SILVER PIECES AT ANY SHOP IN BEDUIN..."
BUSINESS WAS (QUITE UNDERSTANDABLY) FAIRLY BRISK...
"THE TRIBUNAL DECLARED OPEN SEASON ON ANY CITIZEN VENTURING INTO THE STREETS IN AN ATTEMPT TO STOP THE FLOW OF THEIR CURRENCY INTO MY POCKETS"
BUT THEY'RE STILL HELPLESS...
SINGLE-HANDEDLY I'VE MANAGED TO PUT INTO EFFECT THE BIGGEST HALF PRICE SALE IN BEDUIN'S HISTORY...
AND YOU ENGRAVE ALL THIS ONTO PRINTING PLATES EVERY WEEK?!
NO...I USE MOVABLE TYPE -- INDIVIDUAL LETTERS CAST IN LEAD MOLDS. IT'S AN INVENTION OF MY OWN. THE TRIBUNAL IS GOING CRAZY TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW I DO IT..

YOU CONNED THE COCKROACH INTO BUILDING HIMSELF INTO A WALKING MUSCLE EXHIBIT..
...BUT HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO MAKE HIM A FOOT TALLER?
HAND-MADE BOOTS WITH A FORM-FITTING SPACE TO HOLD HIS FOOT IN A VERTICAL POSITION...
WITH THE AMOUNT OF MONEY I'M TAKING IN, I THOUGHT THE LEAST I COULD DO WAS MAKE SURE EVERYONE GETS A GOOD LOOK AT THE BIG LUG...
NOW...
HOW DOES ALL THIS TIE IN WITH WIPING OUT THE HSIFANS?
THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE... THE TRIBUNAL IS BEGINNING TO LEARN THAT THE AVERAGE BEDUINITE IS COMPLETELY BORED BY THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN CIRINISM, KEVILLISM AND ALL THE OTHER HALF-BAKED RELIGIOUS "ISM'S"
NO MATTER WHICH ONE YOU CHOOSE, YOU'RE GOING TO BE OUT OF STEP WITH ALMOST EVERYONE ELSE...
BUT IT ISN'T HARD TO GET A CONSENSUS ABOUT HSIFANS -- THEY'RE YELLOW-SKINNED, THEIR EYES LOOK FUNNY AND THEY'RE NOMADS, FOR TARIM'S SAKE
AND WHAT'S MORE, NO ONE IN LOWER FELDA EVER SEES ONE...
ALL I'VE DONE IS PUT ON PAPER WHAT YOU CAN HEAR ON ANY STREET CORNER IN THIS CITY -- THE HSIFANS ARE SNEAKY, BAD-SMELLING, GIBBERISH-SPOUTING LITTLE WEASEL-EYED DEMONS WHO THINK THEY'RE TOO GOOD FOR US DECENT CIVILIZED FOLK AND IF WE DON'T ELIMINATE THEM NOW, IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY PITCH TENTS IN OUR LIVING ROOMS
BUT THE TRIBUNAL HAS A "HANDS OFF" POLICY TOWARDS THE HSIFAN DON'T THEY?
FOR THE MOMENT
A FEW WEEKS AGO, I CALLED FOR BEDUIN'S ADULT MALES TO ENTER THE ARMY VOLUNTARILY SO WE CAN PREPARE FOR A MASSIVE CAMPAIGN AGAINST THE HSIFAN KHANATE...
REGISTRATION TRIPLED OVERNIGHT...
SO IF THE TRIBUNAL DOESN'T DECLARE WAR ON THE HSIFANS
THEY'LL BE FACING AN UNPARALLELED INSURRECTION IN THE RANKS...
EXACTLY..
WELL, CEREBUS SAID HE WOULD STAY FOR TEN MINUTES, AND HE CERTAINLY GOT HIS MONEY'S WORTH..
HAVE FUN.

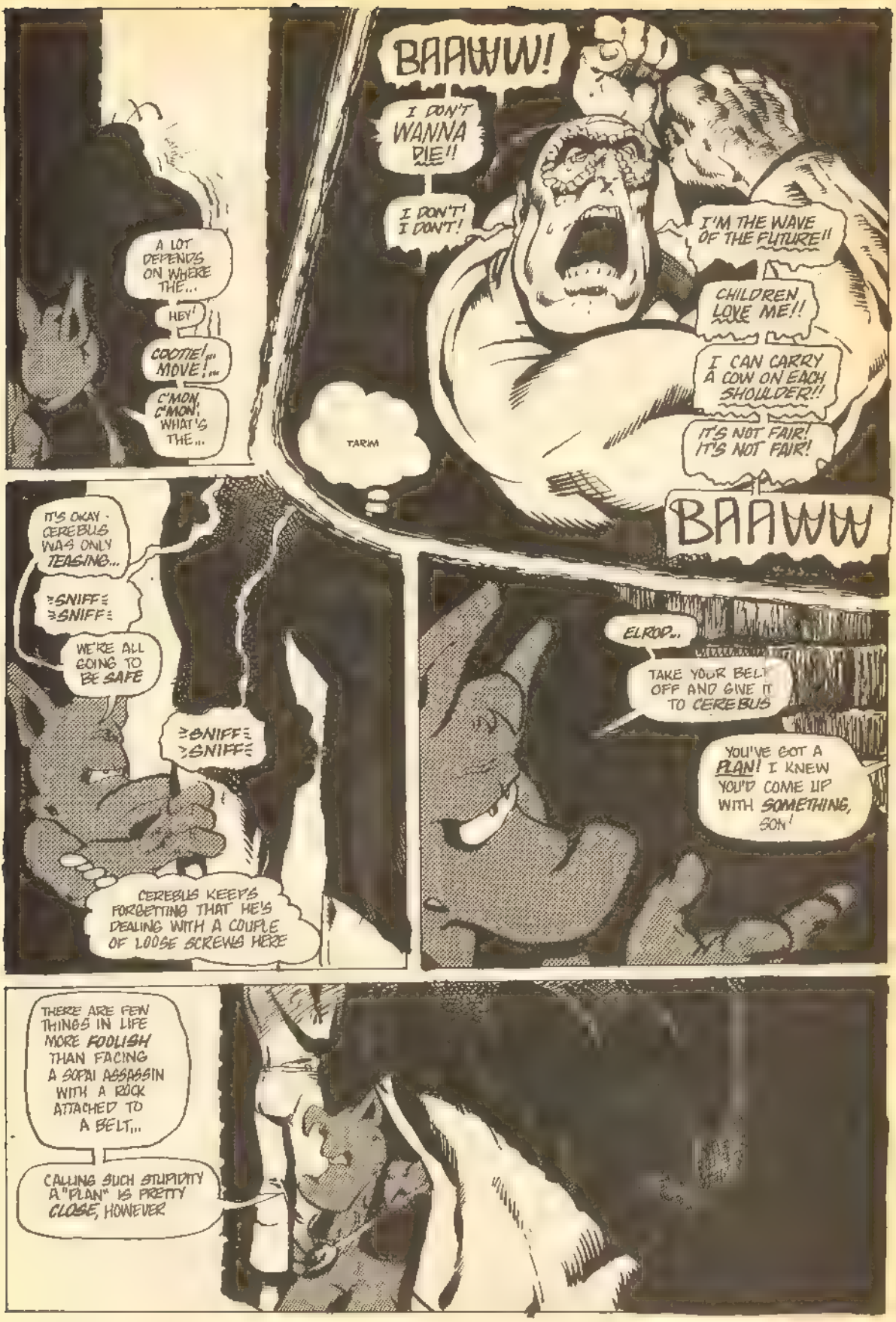
WITHOUT THE PROPER DOCUMENTS YOU'LL NEVER GET PAST THE GENDARMES...
AND EVEN IF YOU DO, THE CITY WAS SEALED A MONTH AGO IN AN EFFORT TO CATCH CAPTAIN CRETINOUS...
AND EVEN IF YOU DEFEAT THE GUARDS AT THE GATE, IT TAKES THREE MEN TO WORK THE WINCH THAT RAISES AND LOWERS THE...
CEREBUS GETS THE IDEA...
HOW DOES ONE GET OUT OF BEDLAM?
MMMM.
YOU KNOW THERE ARE ONLY FIVE BOTTLES OF CHATEAU DONTE '21 LEFT -- AND I HAVE THREE OF THEM..
RUMOURS THAT THE HOUSE NEVER AGAIN ACHIEVED THIS LEVEL OF POTENCY, CLARITY AND SWEETNESS ARE UNFORTUNATELY (AS YOU'LL SEE) ALL TOO TRUE..
AS TO GETTING OUT OF BEDLAM, YOU NEED PAPERS FROM THE TRIBUNAL. VERY DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN...
MM FORGOT THE GLASSES..
OR YOU COULD FIND SOMEONE WITH THE BEST FORGERIES MONEY CAN BUY..
I USUALLY CHARGE FIFTY GOLD PIECES FOR FORGED PAPERS.
BUT I SUPPOSE IN A CASE LIKE THIS I COULD JUST GIVE YOU THE PAPERS COULDN'T I?
HOW'S YOUR WINE?
MM?
EGGLUNT
ABSOLUTELY
..EGGLUNT
'ISAWFULLY DECENT OF YOU.
Y'KNOW?
OH, PIFFLE... IT'S THE VERY LEAST I CAN DO FOR SOMEONE RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING ME A MILLIONAIRE SEVERAL TIMES OVER...

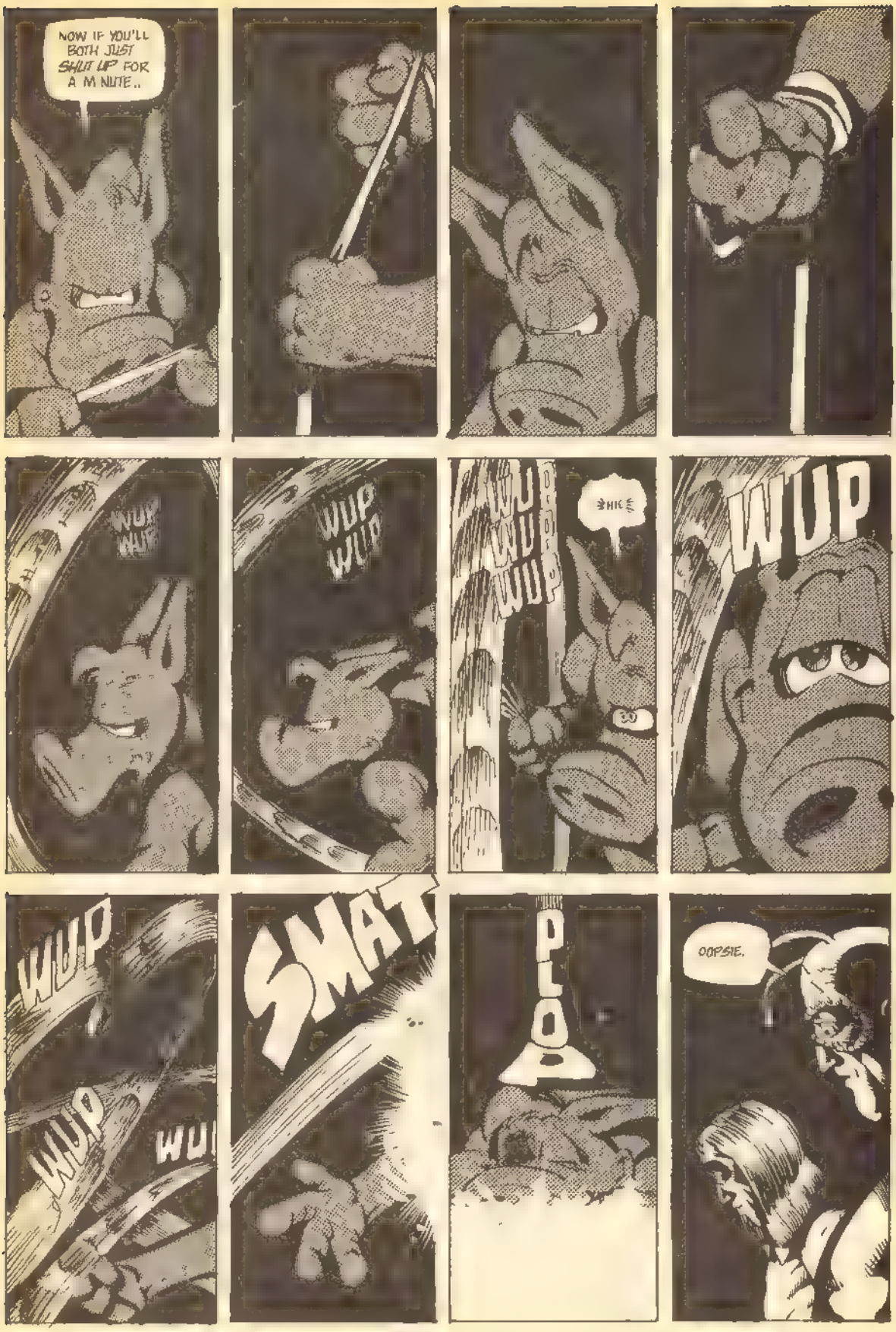
BUNKY, OLD CHUM, DO CEREBUS' EYES LOOK A BIT STRANGE?
I MEAN NOT THAT I'M BEING CRITICAL OR ANYTHING
NOT TO WORRY, SON -- HE'S JUST A LITTLE UNKDRAY -- IPSYTAY, THAT IS ...
DRUNG?
DRUNG?!
DON' KIDDERSELF! CERBUSIS FINE FINE FINE
PRESDET GAVE CERBUS PAPERS
PAPERSAY CERBUS IS FINE FINE FINE!
IT JUST MAKES ME WONDER ABOUT THE YOUTH OF TODAY -- HOW CAN YOU GET ANYTHING WHEN YOU'RE DRUNK OUT OF YOUR ...
HSIFFY-SNEAK-ATTACK, BUNKY!
LOOK OUT!
SPANG!
A BRASS DISC?
NOW WHO WOULD THROW A BRASS DISC AT THE IDOL OF ALL LOWER FELIDA?
WHAT'S MORE IMPORTANT
DOES HE HAVE ANY MORE?
THE ALLEY ACROSS THE STREET ...
HURRY!
HE I SAY HE SOUNDS SOBER, CAPTAIN!
MAYBE WE SHOULD DO WHAT HE SAYS

YOU TWO HAVE BEEN PLAYING "BEAT THE HSIFANS" FOR A WHILE
WELL YOU'RE NOW FACING THE REAL THING
FORTUNATELY FOR YOU, CEREBUS HAS HAD SOME EXPERIENCE WITH HSIFAN SOPAI ASSASSINS
DON'T TAKE THIS THE WRONG WAY, SON, BUT...uh...
..A FEW MINUTES AGO YOU WEREN'T QUITE SO...em...COHERENT...
LUCID, THAT IS..
THE LAST THING CEREBUS REMEMBERS IS HAVING SOME WINE IN THE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE...
CEREBUS WAS DRUGGED A FEW DAYS AGO..THE WINE PROBABLY MIXED WITH THE RESIDUE IN HIS SYSTEM
JUST BE GRATEFUL HE'S OKAY NOW
YOU DON'T GET TWO CHANCES WITH A SOPAI ASSASSIN VERY OFTEN
FIRST THINGS FIRST YOU ESCAPE FROM, NOT FIGHT WITH SOPAI.. KEEP LARGE SOLID OBJECTS BETWEEN YOU AND THEM AT ALL TIMES...
THOSE BRASS DISCS ARE CALLED YAN-SU
..AND THEY CAN TAKE YOUR HEAD OFF WHEN THROWN BY AN EXPERT
THERE'S ONE THING YOU SHOULD NEVER DO WHEN FACING A SOPAI
AND WHAT'S THAT, SON?
UMMM.
CERBUS HASN THE FOGGIES
RILLY

I THINK...
I SAY I THINK HE'S SUFFERED A RELAPSE
NOPE NOPE CERBUS HASN'T GOT A CLUE
YEAH?
WELL THAT SUITS CAPTAIN COCKROACH JUST FINE...
I NEVER DID MUCH CARE FOR RUNNING FROM A SCRAP.
WHAT.. UH DO YOU THINK WE OUGHT TO DO?
THAT DEPENDS SON DEPENDS ON WHAT CEREBUS WAS ABOUT TO TELL US NOT TO DO...
IF HE WAS ABOUT TO SAY "YOU NEVER STAY IN ONE PLACE WHEN FACING A SOPA!"
..THEN I THINK WE SHOULD GRAB HIM AND MAKE A RUN FOR IT...
DOO-DAH DOO DAH
THAT SOUNDS GOOD TO ME! SHOW THE RAT EYED LITTLE HSIFFY SCUM HE CAN'T TRAP US...
ON THE OTHER HAND.
IF HE WAS ABOUT TO SAY "NEVER LEAVE YOUR PLACE OF CONCEALMENT", THEN I THINK WE SHOULD STAY HERE.
THE WAY I FIGURE IT, THE WORST THAT CAN HAPPEN IF WE TRY RUNNING IS THAT WE GET OUR BRAINS BASHED OUT
UNFORTUNATELY...
THAT'S -- I SAY THAT'S ALSO THE WORST THAT CAN HAPPEN IF WE STAY PUT...
YEAH?
WELL, YOU FORGET, BUNKY OLD CHUM, THAT CAPTAIN COCKROACH IS A PROTOTYPE OF THE SUPERMEN OF THE FUTURE!
YOU CAN WAIT HERE WITH THAT WIMP BUNNY 'TIL YOU GROW SOME EYEBALLS, BUT CAPTAIN COCKROACH ...

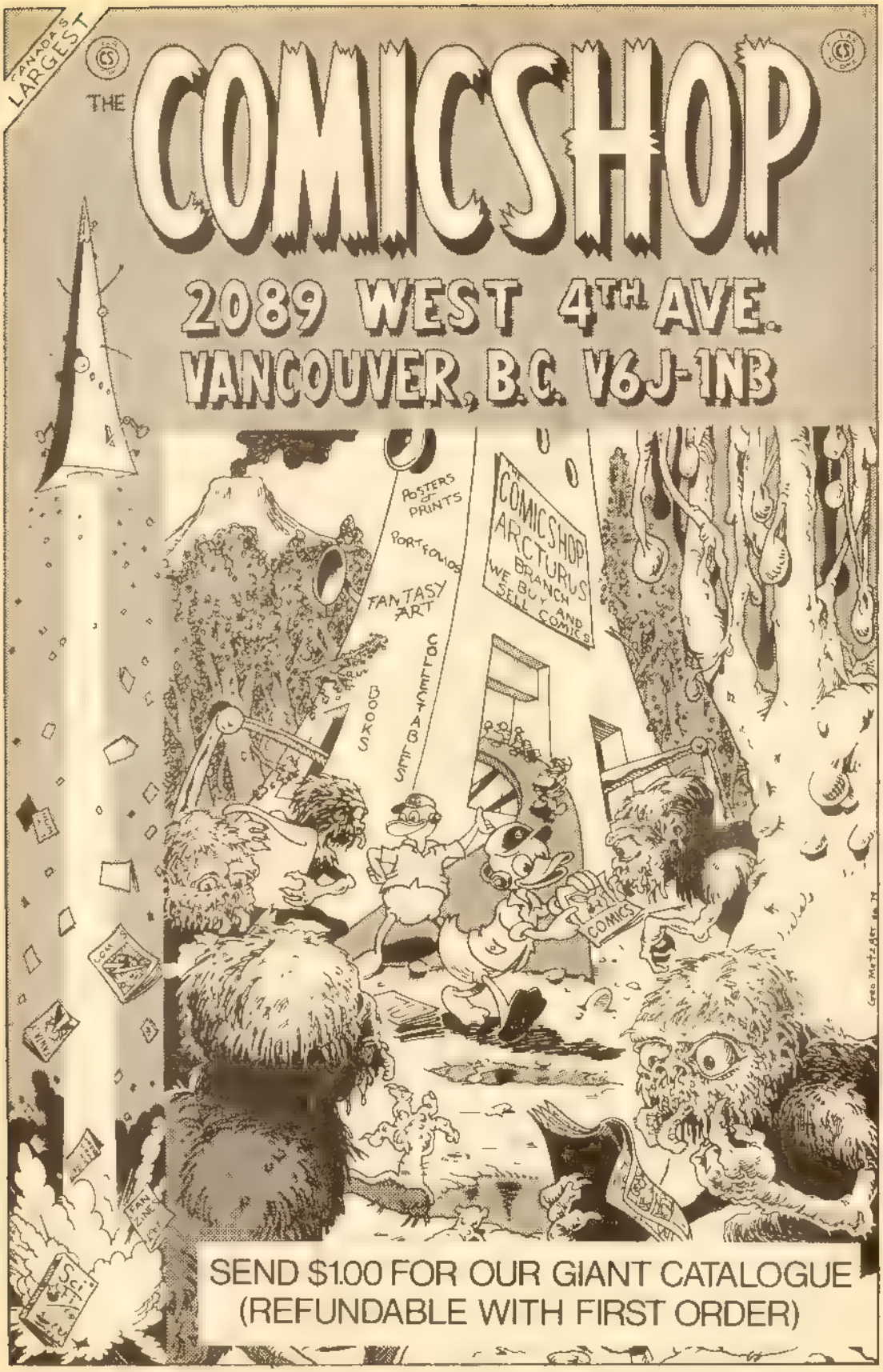
SPTWANG
WILL BE RIGHT HERE BESIDE YOU TO MAKE SURE YOU'RE SAFE...
THANKS
NO THANKS NEEDED IT'S MY JOB.
AS CEREBUS WAS SAYING IF WE STAND HERE HE'S JUST GOING TO OUTFLANK US..
MOVE FARTHER DOWN THE ALLEY-- IF WE STAY CLOSE TO THE WALL WE SHOULD BE ABLE TO SEE HIM COMING
WHY DO YOU SUPPOSE HE'S ATTACKING US?
NO DOUBT HIRED BY THE TRIBUNAL... IF IT MAKES YOU FEEL ANY BETTER HE PROBABLY COST THEM A FORTUNE.
WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE THE ODDS ARE ON US GETTING THAT HSIFFY WEASEL?
PERHAPS CEREBUS ISN'T MAKING HIMSELF UNDERSTOOD.
THE ODDS ARE ABOUT TWELVE TO ONE..
MM I CAN LIVE WITH THAT.
THAT ONE OF US GETS OUT OF HERE ALIVE.
OH
YOU MEAN, WE MIGHT GET . KILLED?
THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE SON -- WE'RE HEROES...
ACTUALLY THAT'S WHAT CEREBUS WAS BASING HIS ODDS ON TWELVE TO-ONE THE ASSASSIN IS ONLY HUNTING YOU TWO HEROES...
COME TO THINK OF IT, YOU'RE PROBABLY SKINNY ENOUGH TO BE A DIFFICULT TARGET...
BUT, I'M AFRAID CHUNKY HERE IS GOING TO BE TWO HUNDRED AND TWENTY POUNDS OF COLD CUTS IN A MINUTE OR SO..


A LOT DEPENDS ON WHERE THE...
HEY!
COOTIE!... MOVE!...
C'MON, C'MON, WHAT'S THE...
BAAWW!
I DON'T WANNA DIE!!
I DON'T! I DON'T!
I'M THE WAVE OF THE FUTURE!!
CHILDREN LOVE ME!!
I CAN CARRY A COW ON EACH SHOULDER!!
IT'S NOT FAIR! IT'S NOT FAIR!
TARIM
BAAWW
IT'S OKAY - CEREBUS WAS ONLY TEASING...
≥SNIFF≤ ≥SNIFF≤
WE'RE ALL GOING TO BE SAFE
≥SNIFF≤ ≥SNIFF≤
CEREBUS KEEPS FORGETTING THAT HE'S DEALING WITH A COUPLE OF LOOSE SCREWS HERE
ELROD..
TAKE YOUR BELT OFF AND GIVE IT TO CEREBUS
YOU'VE GOT A PLAN! I KNEW YOU'D COME UP WITH SOMETHING, SON!
THERE ARE FEW THINGS IN LIFE MORE FOOLISH THAN FACING A SOPAI ASSASSIN WITH A ROCK ATTACHED TO A BELT...
CALLING SUCH STUPIDITY A "PLAN" IS PRETTY CLOSE, HOWEVER


NOW IF YOU'LL BOTH JUST SHUT UP FOR A MINUTE..
WUP WUP
WUP WUP
WU WU WU
HIC
WUP
WUP
WUP
WU
SMAT
PLOP
OOPSIE.

NEXT:

The DEATH OF ELROD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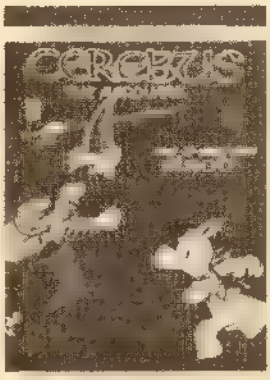

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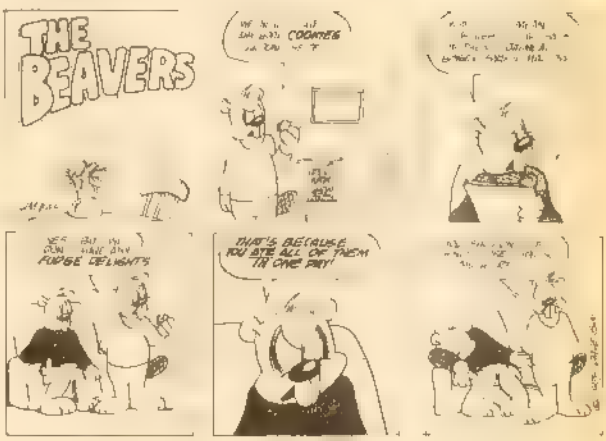

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AARDVARK COMMENT

221 QUEEN ST S. #1401 - KITCHENER-ONTARIO N2G 1W5

Greetings!

Two days ago my friend, Randy, who is stationed in Colorado, sent me CEREBUS 5-17. My favourite comic is not available near here, so I must find other means of building my library. However, he is willing to aid me in my quest for Cerebus.

I had not read 17 till a few minutes ago, but I was impressed, to say the least. The illustrations have continuously improved over the months and 17 is no exception. After all, I was once a reader of pop superhero comics which had the artwork of preschoolers compared to Dave Sim's work. It's a refreshing change.

But, there are some who say that I am too old to read such books. To that I say, "Bull." If one can't share in the imagination and creativity of others, what is life worth? How can people who don't like science fiction and/or fantasy judge such a thing? When they make comments like those, Cerebus should hack them into fertilizer.

Anyway, keep up the good work, Dave and Deni. I will be looking forward to 18 and beyond.

Bruce S. Howland, AIC, USAF
PSC Box 1953
Mountain Home, Air Force Base, ID
83648

Too old? Are you kidding? Take a look at the next letter, Bruce. If the writer isn't on the shady side of thirty, I'll turn my copies of Savage Sword 2 and 3 into fertilizer.

• • •

Dear Dave,

I absolutely love Cerebus (how do you pronounce that?) and I pray that you never stop making the book. I found out about Cerebus with issue 15 and have since acquired all of the issues except numbers 1-4 and 13,14. I know it is virtually impossible to find issues 1-4 but I would like to know of a place where I may purchase issues 13 and 14 and how much they would cost.

Also I would like to know how much you charge for each page of original artwork. Thank you! And thank you for such an excellent comic book!

John Zeleznik
752 Guinda St.,
Palo Alto, Ca.
94301

I'm starting to think Harry sends all these letters in himself. You can get issues 2 to the present from Now and then Books, 103 Queen St. S., Kitchener, Ontario. Their ad is elsewhere in this issue. Issues 11 to the present are cover price, plus .35 postage.

• • •

Dear Dave and Deni,

Excellent. That is the only word I can use to describe Cerebus. In the six (seven?) years I have collected comics, I have never had a letter published. I hope this isn't one of those times.

Let me begin my criticism (though there isn't much to criticize about) by saying that with every issue the book gets better. Although Cerebus and Howard the Duck, but Cerebus far surpasses Howard, in both art and story.

The only real complaint I have about the book is the covers the color seems to be very lackluster.

Good luck in the future (even though you don't really need it).

James Timlick
382 Madison St.,
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3J 1H8

Thank you for your kind thoughts. The last sentence in paragraph two looks to me like a serious drug problem. I suggest you seek counselling.

• • •

Dear Dave & Deni,

Pray Pardon this hasty note, but I fear that beyond it, I shall never find the time to let you know how much I enjoy Cerebus.

I have been receiving your books in the post and with issue 18 there was included a note asking if I was getting them (This is always a difficult tact to take: "Excuse me, can you hear me? If you can't hear me, knock three times...").

I immediately took to the pleasant task of writing a lengthy letter cum critique ... quite glowing it was. But other urgent matters displaced me after only half an hour, thus I can hear you, but my thrice-knockings are muffled and indistinct.

I must conclude; I am distracted; I shall write again.

P.S. Please never leave Cerebus to make Limited Edition Prints ... or some other such nonsense.

Barry Windsor-Smith
Box 92,
Madison Square Station,
New York, N.Y.

Limited Edition Prints? There's money in those things, is there?

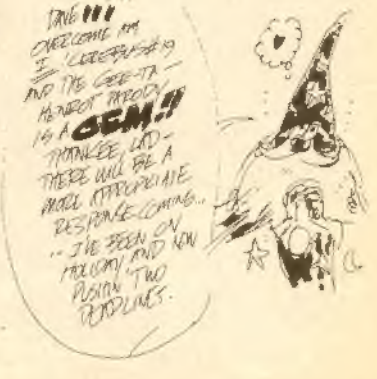
• • •

Notes

This issue was composed under somewhat bizarre conditions. The day I was supposed to start writing it, I was at Mosport for a ten-band concert of new wave and punk music (ranging from the Pretenders to Elvis Costello). A week later, I was at the CNE in Toronto watching Queen and Bob Seger on successive nights and still I had nary a thought about issue 21. By the time September 8 rolled around, I had the first five pages written. And that was when I settled down to some serious work. It got progressively more serious as the days skimmed past, until here I am, the day before this absolutely HAS to be at the printers, madly typing whatever comes into my fevered little brain. In short this was one of those issues that is better to have drawn than to be drawing. The major result of doing a book on such an improvisational basis is the way all the outside tasks get put on stand-by. By next issue, I hope to have the format for the newsletter worked out, a cohesive plan for selling the original artwork so no one gets offended, and a package of promotional materials ready to go to a number of comic shops.

But if a good concert comes along, all you'll probably see next issue is next issue.

Dave will be at Creation Con in Rochester on Nov. 22 & 23.



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